

ResearchDigest

Research conference workshops now online

A wealth of research material presented at the inaugural Education and Training Foundation Research Conference is now available online and free to all further education practitioners.

Video presentations from the conference, held in July at the Mary Ward Centre, London, showcase work undertaken by practitioners across the FE and training sector as part of the Foundation's practitioner research programmes.

The presentations are in broad categories, including: technology; professional development; maths and ESOL; curriculum; professionalism and offender learning. There are a number of presentations in each category with links to additional resources.

Sheila Kearney, the Foundation's head of research, said the videos offered a wonderful insight into the Foundation's practitioner-led research programmes, designed to support "research for the sector, by the sector".

• Places on the 2015-16 Research Development Fellowship (RDF) Programme and the Exploratory Research in Maths and English Programme have now been allocated. This year, SET awarded personal bursaries to 11 of the successful applicants who were members.

Measure learner performance on a scale of one to 10



Can scaling from the OSKAR framework have an impact on student progress? By **Andrew Stork** and **Ben Walker**

In our research, we sought to address the difficulty many students have in expressing how they feel they are progressing and were particularly interested in a tool from within solution-focused coaching – scaling.

This is where a student is asked to rate their wellbeing and performance on a scale from one to 10.

Our research question was 'how does the use of scaling from the OSKAR (outcome, scaling, know-how and resources, affirm and action and review) framework impact upon student progress and emotional wellbeing?'

Test groups involved full-time 16-18 year-old students across a range of vocational subject areas and levels. Seven were 'experimental' groups and seven were control groups where scaling was not used.

One-to-one conversations were undertaken by the personal tutors over a 12-week period and quantitative data was gathered from questionnaires completed by students at the beginning, middle and end of this period. Qualitative data was gathered from focus groups carried out by us with all research groups.

The statistical analysis of questionnaires showed no

significant difference between the scaling and non-scaling groups in terms of students' perception of their performance and wellbeing.

The thematic analysis from the focus groups showed some students felt that scaling in one-to-one conversations helped to clarify their priorities, made it easier to assess their on-going progress and helped others (personal tutors and teachers) to take action on their behalf.

Students generally found

it easier to articulate current progress and self-evaluate their performance through a number than through description. Some students said that scaling helped to improve their confidence and motivation.

Other students questioned the reliability of the scale because feelings change daily and that there may be a temptation to make up numbers because they didn't want to admit weakness. Some felt scaling has less meaning if they are doing well.

However, perhaps the most significant finding of the research was the overwhelmingly positive response of students to their experience of one-to-ones with their personal tutors.

Many had no experience of this type of meeting before and said that they felt better appreciated and motivated. One-to-ones made them feel more comfortable and relaxed which meant they could be open and honest in what felt like a two-way conversation with open-minded tutors.

The content of one-to-ones helped students to identify areas

READER OFFER

Andrew and Ben's book *Becoming an Outstanding Personal Tutor: Supporting Learners through Personal Tutoring and Coaching* is available at criticalpublishing.com and SET members are eligible for a 20 per cent discount until 31 March 2016. Use code **BOPT2015**.

for development and agree SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related) targets. Some students said that their attendance, behaviour and time-keeping also improved as a result. Andrew's and Ben's research was supported in 2014-15 by the ETF Research Development Fellowship (RDF) Programme.

Andrew Stork and **Ben Walker** share responsibility for the personal tutoring, coaching and support of students on full-time 16-18 courses at The Sheffield College, City Campus.
www.andrewstork.co.uk
www.benwalker.co.uk

ELMAG portal leads the way

Research, resources, a reflective practice tool and a network of peers and potential mentors are all available through the Excellence in Leadership, Management and Governance (ELMAG) portal.

The portal is a one-stop-shop for managers, leaders and governors and practitioners seeking to take their first steps on to the management and leadership ladder.

The resources section allows users to access resources in a range of areas including learning technology; maths and English delivery and leading in local areas.

Each month there are spotlight resources - this month's being the government's Area Reviews. There is also a link to the Excellence Gateway where further resources are available.

A wide range of management, leadership and governance courses can be accessed via the course finder facility. Users can browse by keyword and theme and there is a special section for those courses subsidised by the Education and Training Foundation. It is also possible to

apply for a programme bursary.

The leadership reflection tool can help users identify their development needs. The tool is based on a model from the Leadership Conversation Project which was commissioned by the Foundation and run by a range of bodies including the 157 Group, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers and NIACE.

There are now more than 450 members of the ELMAG network which allows managers and leaders to seek and offer support to colleagues in other parts of the sector through informal conversations, joining one of the discussion forums, or setting up your own mentoring arrangements.

The ELMAG portal was commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation and developed by UCL Institute of Education in partnership with Tintisha Technologies.
www.elmag.org.uk

EXCELLENCE GATEWAY

This month's featured research and resources on the Excellence Gateway include: the influencing factors of good practice; South Leicestershire College: career progression development; talent management report; Bromley Cluster: and the value of partnership working.

They are a tiny fraction of the research and resources available through the gateway which allows you to browse by theme, subject, audience, sector, resource type and subject level. The Excellence Gateway is free and open to all. Have a look around at www.excellencegateway.org.uk

Practice tips

The research suggests the following good-practice tips

- Schedule regular one-to-one conversations with students about their progress.
- In conversations, take a coaching approach which is open and non-directive.
- Use a tool such as scaling so students can express how they feel they are progressing.
- Don't forget the importance of using SMART targets alongside this approach.
- Scaling also makes it easier for teachers and tutors to take action on learners' behalf.

The research suggests the following benefits to your students and your organisation

- Students are more likely to open up about barriers to learning and to find ways to overcome them.
- Positive emotions are elicited in students such as increased motivation, feeling more relaxed and open, and reduced feelings of inferiority.
- Students' attendance, behaviour and time-keeping can be positively affected.
- Students find it easier to articulate and assess their progress, to see ways they can improve by moving up the scale through improvements (particularly if used alongside SMART targets) and for others to take action on their behalf.

Presentations from this year's research conference are at: bit.ly/ETF_practitioner_led_AR